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ENTS TO ANGLERS

BY

ADAM DRYDEN

WITH MAPS





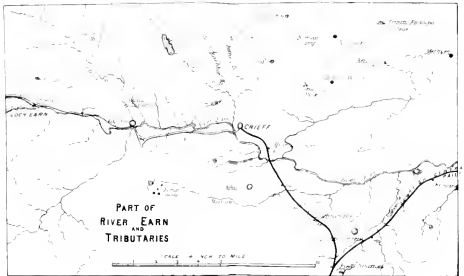
HINTS TO ANGLERS.



EDINBURGH

ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

1862



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HINTS TO ANGLERS.



FLY-FISHING.



THE first great requisite in fly-fishing is to be able to throw the line dexterously. This art can only be acquired by practice. The error that most anglers commit, is allowing their line to remain much too long in the water. They allow it to float slowly down stream under the expectation that, in its course, the flies will come within the scope of some trout's eyesight; and that the fish will certainly be attracted by the lure, when once he has seen it. Now, in the earlier months of the year, that is, till about the month of May, this system of fishing may do well enough; indeed it is best then to fish down stream. The trout are neither so active nor so wary as they become, generally speaking, shortly after the month of May has begun. But whenever they

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begin to get into good condition, and through all the summer months, you will find this system of fishing down stream a very unproductive one. In fact, when the rivers are small and clear, it is wholly useless. You must fish up stream ; and cast frequently. It is a matter of much importance not to get eager or excited, as you will then be sure to make all kinds of blunders. Get a light rod, and fish rapidly upwards, throwing in all directions, and in all kinds of water. You will often find trout where the river is not four inches deep ; indeed, in hot weather you will find the very shallow water the best. By throwing your flies over all kinds of water, you will gain information even from your unsuccessful casts, as to what sort of water the trout are not then lying in.

If you raise a good trout without hurting him severely, throw twice or thrice to some other spot ; after giving him which respite, if you can let your hook drop neatly and softly over him, you are almost certain to kill him. Always stand on the shallow side of the stream or pool ; and, above all, keep out of sight. If possible, when actually fishing, it is better to keep out of the water, as the commotion you make in wading is apt to frighten the fish, unless in a rough stream. The most likely spot you can have in hot weather is at the top of a stream, just in the break of the water. When you go a little above this, in small rivers, you will see the trout swimming

away in shoals. Yet, if you can contrive to keep out of sight, you may capture them.

With regard to striking, the slightest motion, just sufficient to tighten the line, is enough to hook a trout. Fishing in the manner that I have described above, any angler will return after a day's sport with a heavy basket. Even if he is not quick sighted enough to see the fish rise, so as to strike them instantly, many are quite certain to hook themselves. Anglers generally think that a deep pool is the place in which they are sure to find trout. This is a mistake ; you ought to fish twenty or thirty yards above or below the pool ; for any fish which may be in it, it is almost impossible to take. It is a point of great consequence to know in what kind of water trout are likely to be feeding during the different seasons of the year ; but it is impossible to lay down rules for this, so much depending upon the weather. But, if you begin by throwing over all kinds of water, you will soon see where the trout are to be found. It will soon appear whether they are feeding in the pools or streams, in deep or in shallow water.

I can fix no particular day in spring at which fly-fishing may be said to begin ; but when you see a full bud upon the thorn bush, you may then expect to find the flies beginning to come upon the river, and this is the signal for the angler to resume his pastime. Yet you may kill trout with the fly,

if you are so disposed, even in the dead of winter, if the day is mild. You must then fish down stream ; and your best chance of sport will be in the large still pools. But the trout are out of condition ; and it is hardly fair sport to kill them. In spring, the angler will observe that until the fly comes on the river, which it does at certain times of the day, the trout will not rise at all. The reason is, that at this season the flies, instead of playing about more or less on the water all day, as they do in summer, come on fitfully, in great swarms ; and until the swarm does come on, the angler will do nothing except with the very finest tackle ; and even with it, he will not do much, the trout being then all collected together in deep water, where there is no current. But whenever the flies come on, the trout separate ; each of them going to his own feeding spot. If the angler tries to allure them when they are in the deep water, he will be giving himself unnecessary trouble. The colder the morning, the later will the flies be in coming on. The best day in spring is when it is warm and sunny till eleven or twelve o'clock, and then grows dull. If it rains, so much the better. On such a day, the angler ought to have capital sport ; and I would advise him to choose a place where trout are plentiful, and where there is a good landing-place. In a large river like the Tweed it is needless to go over much ground. Select a good spot, and fish it over and

over again. Both before and after the flies come on, the finest tackle should be used. If the angler sees a large trout rise repeatedly, he should place himself opposite the spot, and cast frequently, about two yards above the spot where the trout rose ; and he will seldom fail to catch him. Whenever the flies go off, you might fancy that the fish had quitted the river. You will not see one moving. The reason is that during the "take," they keep all the flies they catch in their mouths ; and when, by the disappearance of the fly, they find that they can get no more, they go to the bottom to gorge their prey.

Always keep to the bottom of the pool. By "pool," I mean any sheet of water where the current is gentle. You must never stand more than an inch or two higher than the level of the water. This is a most important point in the art of keeping out of the trouts' sight. Never allow any one to fish opposite to you in a narrow river. Any one doing so will spoil your sport by frightening the fish. If you fairly hook a trout and it gets off, even though it be a very large one, don't waste time with trying to hook it again. Such a thing has been done, but the chance of doing it is very small indeed.

In large rivers like the Tweed, I have said that when the trout are taking you should confine yourself to a select spot. In small rivers you should always move rapidly over the ground. But of course when you are killing well you will not move so fast

as when your sport is bad. Generally, the best water is from six to eighteen inches deep, in ordinary summer weather ; but in hot weather the water can hardly be too shallow. In fishing down the stream, bear in view that you are not to throw your flies down the stream. On the contrary, you are to cast up the stream, and let your hooks float down towards you, but not past you. You should also cast often ; and if you have a good pool on the side which you are fishing from, fish that pool before you try the opposite side ; for, in landing a trout hooked on the opposite side, you would frighten all the fish in the pool next you by bringing it across. In fishing up stream, as you must always do in summer, you must cross and recross, so as always to have the shallow part of the water next to you. Where the water is still and slow, you can't cast too often. If a trout takes your fly at all, he will take it on the instant that it falls on the water. If he has any time for contemplation, he will discover the cheat. In rough water, however, you may allow your flies to remain for a few seconds. When you hook a trout, and there is no place close beside you to land it, drag it down the stream. This not only chokes the trout, but it does not disturb the water which you have yet to fish, as taking the trout up the stream would do. I nearly always fish with small flies, and with few varieties. The largest I ever use are Nos. 2 and 3 Addlington. I do not

mean to say that the angler may not use larger ones at some seasons. In the latter end of May, and during the whole of June, you will see great quantities of flies of different colours and sizes on the river, yet to try to imitate these, either in colours or in size, is, I think, a mistake. You will lose more than you will gain by doing so. The great points, I have always found, are light dressing and fine gut ; and any hook larger than No. 2 Addlington cannot be dressed on fine gut. The large hook will cut the fine gut, which will cause a great loss both of time and tackle, and, perhaps, of the even more valuable commodities of temper and patience.

You should observe the colour of the flies on the water, and, having done so, put artificial ones on your casting line as like the insect as possible. I repeat, be sure to have fine gut. Most anglers have immense quantities of different kinds of flies. For my part I have only six varieties for the whole year ; and I often fish with three or four on my casting line all of the same kind.

My favourite flies are as follows :—The black spider, to be used on a bright day and in a small, clear river, such as Gala or Leader—a coloured fly is preferable in the Tweed. In a dull day, both in large and small rivers, coloured flies are the best. Drab is a good colour, and the softest feathers should be used. Those of the corn bunting, yellow hammer, lark, starling (grey and black), sparrow, and

chaffinch are good, also the thrush, early in the year. I am very partial to the hare's ear. The grey wing, with a black starling hackle is a good fly, but the hackles get soon destroyed by the trouts' teeth. I am very partial to spiders made from the outside of the wing of any of the above-mentioned birds. One side of the feather should be taken off. They are easily destroyed, but they are the most killing flies that I know; the reason being that there is very little dressing upon them, and flies which are not bulky are always the most successful. I generally fish with three hooks upon my gut line, the second one being about a yard above the first, the third about two feet above the second. If you have a black spider, and are fishing in small clear waters, make it the end hook, and let the upper hooks, or "bobs," as they are called, be attached to the gut casting line by not more than three inches of gut. The gut should be stained blue.

WORM.

In worm-fishing, if the water is of good size, I prefer a 15 to 18 foot rod, as light as possible. The casting line should consist of 5 or 6 lengths of triple gut. In fishing pools, you should have 12 or 13 lengths of single gut added to the triple, but in streams, 5 or 6 lengths will be sufficient. I con-

sider what is now called "*Stewart's tackle*" to be the best, and I always fish with it. The best worm fishing is to be got at the bottom of a large pool, and I prefer the shallow side. You must wade up the middle of the pool, if possible ; and be very cautious not to make any disturbance in the water, as, though the trout cannot hear, they have very wonderful powers of sight. Cast alternately on each side of you. A good breeze is advantageous in fishing the pools. I prefer the brandling to any other kind of worms. I use No. 3 Addlingtons for the *Stewart tackle*, and I would recommend a No. 8 to those who use the single tackle. It is of the utmost importance to have good worms. I like them small and clear. You should carry two bags for a day's sport ; for the heat of the hand, in taking out the worms, spoils them in course of an hour or two. You should put about a teaspoonful of water occasionally into the bag that you have in use.

The brandling worms should be kept in a jar of moss with a few inches of water at the bottom. You should change both moss and water every day. Earth worms should be kept in earth until three days before you use them ; they should then be put into damp moss, and the moss changed each day. This is troublesome, but it is of the utmost consequence to have your bait in order. Both the triple gut line and the single ought to taper downwards. The tackle ought to be on the very finest gut. And

I may here remark that in all clear water fishing, without any exception, fine tackle is of the utmost consequence. I have often great difficulty in procuring gut fit for fishing in clear waters in summer, when the trout are well fed and shy. You must of course fish up the stream. Steal cautiously along ; and, when wading, as I have said, do not make the water heave before you. If the weather is cold, you will do best in deepish water ; when the weather is hot, you will kill best in the shallowest. Keep little line in the water ; for two reasons—in the first place, the less you have under water your bait will float down the more naturally, and when the trout attacks it, he will not find the resistance that he would otherwise find. You will generally find a trout lying in a deepish run under a bank, behind a stone, or where a bush overhangs, and in all kinds of sheltered situations in the neighbourhood of streams. Cast frequently. If you throw to the right bit, the trout will take you at once. If you throw to the wrong, he wont take you at all. With the *Stewart tackle*, as a general rule, you should strike quickly, but gently, almost immediately after you see the twitter of the line. But this, to some extent, depends on how the trout are taking. If you are losing a great many, you may try the effect of giving them a little longer time. The tackle is used without a sinker. There is no branch of angling which affords more exhilarating

sport than that of worm-fishing, pursued in the manner given above. The season begins in the end of May, and may be said to finish about the beginning of August. The trout are in their very best condition, strong and wary, yet not wary enough to elude the skill of the cunning angler ; for, equipped in the manner that I have mentioned, and with dexterity and caution, you may kill trout in the clearest and stillest water, and even when there is no breeze.

I might enlarge upon many other points connected with worm-fishing, but I think it is better not to burden the angler with too many instructions. There are certain rules applicable both to worm and fly-fishing. Exercise keen observation. Learn as speedily as possible where the trout are feeding. Practice alone will enable you to throw neatly and precisely to the spot where experience has shewn you that the fish is likely to be. In nine cases out of ten he will take your fly or worm immediately, if he is going to take it at all. Fish rapidly, therefore, and never throw your line without aiming at the spot where you expect to find him. In fishing a stream with worm, you may no doubt allow your bait to run down so that a trout may seize it on the way ; but, in the worm season, you will kill best in the runs and corners such as I have described above, and these you must fish rapidly.

MINNOW.

Minnow may be employed with success during most of the angling season, in small waters such as Gala, Almond, and Esk. But in large rivers, such as the Tweed, it is not very successful until about midsummer. The best place to kill with minnow is in large pools; and the best time is just after a fresh or *spate* in the river. Streams can only be fished when the water is clear. You will kill well with minnow just in such sheltered corners as I have alluded to in worm-fishing. You must use tackle as fine as in fly-fishing, if the water is clear; but if the water is heavy, you may use stronger. I use two hooks—one goes through the lips of the minnow—the other, which is two sizes larger, goes along and through the body. In clear water, the minnow should not be more than one inch and a quarter in length. In muddy water, larger ones may be used. Whenever you either feel or see a trout, slacken the line instantly. Whenever the trout feels the line tight, he will immediately let go the bait, if he can. Indeed this remark is applicable to every kind of fishing, and it is an important one for the learner to note. *Whenever a trout feels resistance he will let go your bait, whatever it be, if he can.* But, from the system pursued in minnow-fishing, it is much more difficult to guard

against this danger in it, than in any other kind of angling. You should use two swivels, and see that they spin well; if they do not, they are useless. Small minnows are the best. My plan for catching them is the following:—I have a piece of dark-coloured cotton sewed up, so as to form a kind of bag about two feet wide, and one foot deep. The bottom of this bag is weighted with lead—when I see a shoal of minnows in shallow water, forming a kind of bay at the side of the river, I get between them and the main stream. By advancing cautiously, dragging the bag along the bottom, you may thus capture great numbers—you should have salt with you, and a jar; you may then pickle your minnows on the spot. When you wish to preserve them for future use, when you come home, spread them out on a board until they are quite dry—you must turn them occasionally, when drying them. Then put them into jars, covering them so as to be air tight. In minnow-fishing, throw your bait across the stream; so as to alight on any likely spot opposite to you. By pulling the line backwards and forwards, work it to the edge of the side on which you are fishing. When once the line is straight, raise slowly and throw again. As much as possible, keep always a bend in the line, so that when the trout strikes the minnow, he may feel as little resistance as possible. If your line is straight from the point of the rod to the bait, you may raise

twenty fish and not hook one. And if you strike instead of slackening when the trout rises, you will have no better success. You must slacken *instantly*, I might say simultaneously ; give him a few seconds, then strike gently but decidedly. Never strike violently on any occasion, either in minnow or any other kind of fishing. It does not require much force to put a hook into a trout's mouth. By striking violently, you run a great risk of tearing the hook out after it is in, or of breaking your tackle, if the fish is large.

CREEPER AND MAY FLY, ETC.

Creepers may be used with success from the middle of April. They are generally very plentiful at that period. The system of fishing is much the same as with worm, only in rougher water. A bright day is necessary ; but the trout will take early in the morning in dull weather. I use two Addlington's No. 6, tied one immediately above the other. The end hook goes through the lower part of the body, and the upper hook through the shoulders of the creeper. Give the trout time, and strike as in worm fishing. May fly is used in the same manner, only in finer waters. You will find creepers most plentiful near the top of a stream, and about the edge of the water. In cold weather,

they will be almost in it. They are generally carried in a tin box about four inches deep, with holes in the top. The May fly is found in similar places, but where the stones are dry near the water. I generally carry them in a bag; and when I need one, I open the bag a little. One is then sure to creep up. I catch him at once with one hand, and tighten the bag with the other. This is the most simple way of carrying them. The May fly is very deadly for the first week after its appearance, which is generally about the 25th of May; but after the first week, the trout do not take it greedily for some time. Before the disappearance of the fly, however, they return to it, though never with the same keenness of appetite as they shewed at first. You must fish with a large rod, and the trout will take the fly in any stream where it is to be found.

SALMON ROE.

I will not enter on the question of the fairness or unfairness of roe-fishing; but give my system, and leave every man to judge for himself. If the water is muddy, I use a No. 8 Addlington. I fish with one hook, and the line must be leaded according to the strength and depth of the water. In a muddy stream, a party of two or three may do very well. If you are fishing alone, you may put on

two hooks about 18 inches apart. When the trout have fairly begun to take, however, it will then be better to remove the uppermost hook. Always stand on the shallow side of a pool, and don't throw far in. Confine yourself to a space of from 10 to 20 yards, going over it again and again. It is not uncommon to fish in the same place for twenty minutes before you get a nibble, particularly in the summer months. You must strike sharply (but not violently) whenever you feel a bite. Generally speaking, you must not give so much time as in worm-fishing. Don't throw any roe into the water before beginning, as some anglers do. This is only a waste of material. Trout will take roe at any season ; but in summer you will be much annoyed with eels. In pools they often render the use of roe impossible. In clear water, fishing with roe, you must use a small hook and very fine tackle. You need not be disheartened if you see no fish when you begin. In a little while you will see a good many below you. Don't stay long in one place—I speak of clear-water fishing—but keep moving down. A junction of any rivers generally affords a good roe cast. Salmon and grilse are not easily taken with this lure. I never caught any with it, though I have tried it at all seasons, and in every description of place.

In the autumnal months, you should choose a ford or stream which salmon are in the habit of fre-

quenting for the purpose of spawning ; and if there be any sea trout near, so much the better. Begin by throwing your bait two or three yards behind the "redds," as the spawning beds are called ; and having done so, follow down the stream. If it is rapid, put on a heavy sinker. You should first fish near the edge, and as the trout cease to take, throw further and further till you cannot easily manage a longer line. Then go a little down, and you will generally get a good trout about twenty yards from where you began. You must be careful, however, not to disturb the salmon, or you will not do much after they are gone. Trout killed in this way are all strong and in good condition ; for it is only such that can live in so rapid water. It is therefore necessary to have strong tackle for this sort of fishing, and hooks two sizes larger than what are commonly used for roe. You will, in this way, often kill trout gorged with the new laid roe. I have sometimes squeezed a handful out of one. I once killed a trout near Dryburgh with 78 eggs in its mouth ; and in addition to that, he had two par in his gullet, though he did not exceed a pound in weight.

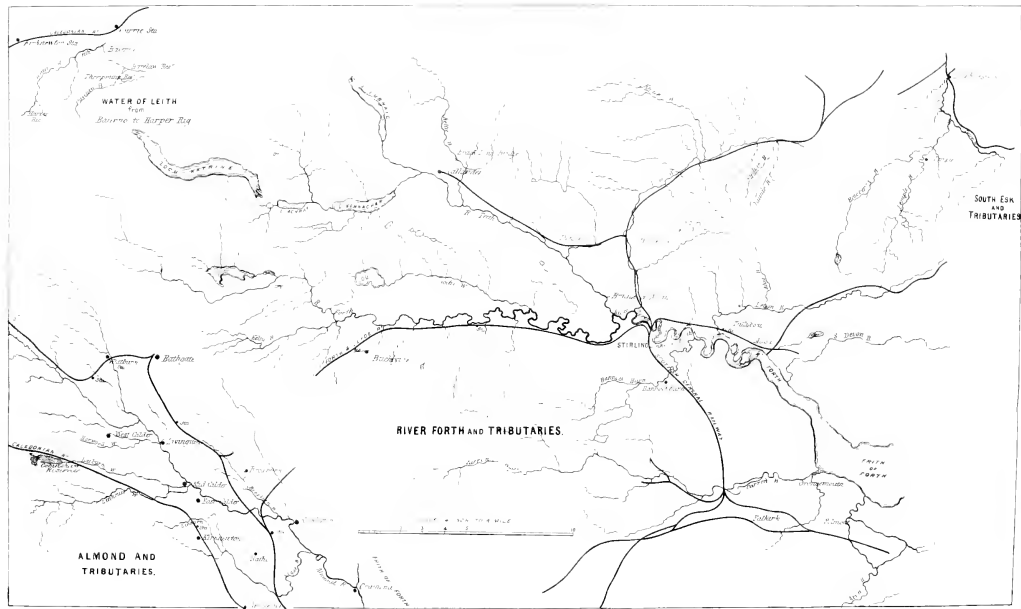
Minnow and worm may be fished in the same way in winter ; but the salmon will be apt to take them.

My system of preparing roe is as follows :—If it is not thoroughly ripe, it must be washed with water so as to clear it of all membrane and blood.

Then put about five ounces of salt to each pound of roe ; stir it, gently at first, so that the salt may not break the globules ; stir until the whole gets jellied. Then drain off the brine by means of a sieve, put it on a plate, and dry slowly at the fire. If you then roll it in cloth to take the damp thoroughly off, it will be fit for immediate use. Nothing but salt must be used ; saltpetre will totally destroy it. To preserve it, put it into air-tight pots.

Some people prefer the roe of the salmon to that of the bull trout, or sea trout ; I myself consider them quite equal in point of merit. But there is another kind which is the most deadly of all, viz., that of the common river trout ; it is fit for use about the end of August ; it is prepared by simply salting ; it cannot be kept more than a few weeks ; nor so long, unless in an air-tight vessel. A very good plan is to take a little salt with you when you go to fish ; you can take the roe out of any trout you may kill, then rub it in the salt until the moisture is pretty well out of the roe ; you may then use it immediately. You will find this the deadliest bait of all. Trout will take almost any bait, from a midge to a mouse ; but those which I have enumerated are the best. I have myself killed a trout with a full-grown mouse in its inside. Grasshoppers are a good bait, but they are difficult to be got. Gentle and cod bait are also good. When fishing with the artificial fly, you may often use the cod bait





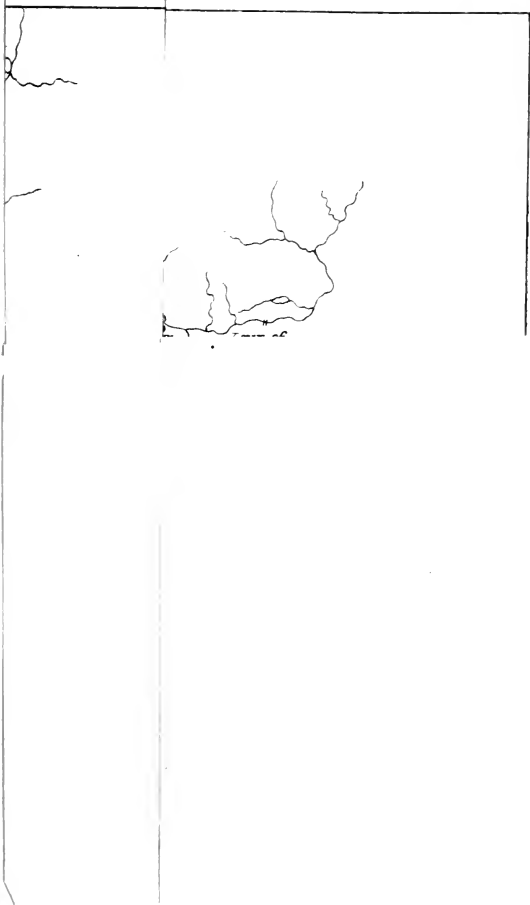
with advantage. Put it on the fly hooks, and fish quite in the same way as if it were not there ; you should have it on when the sun shines ; when it is cloudy you must fish without it. It is often useful in the month of August. The grub of the wasp is sometimes a good bait ; you must use it in deep water, behind some projection of the bank ; you must make it roll round as much as possible. The May fly tackle is used in this kind of fishing. Many large trout may be killed in this way.

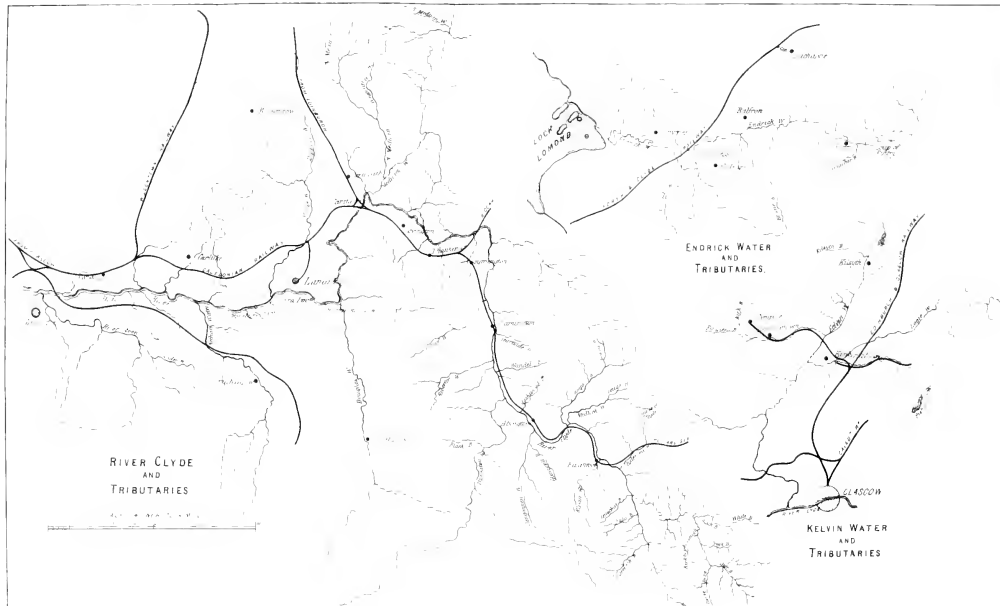
STREAMS OF THE FORTH, AND NEAR EDINBURGH.

The Esk above Dalhousie is a good trouting stream. It divides into two branches. The one on the right is the Roseberry ; the other is Temple Burn. One day I killed in the Esk thirteen dozen of trout which weighed 23 pounds. The Water of Leith is a good stream above Balerno Bridge. Four dozen and a half trout taken in this water weigh on an average 14 pounds. The Almond, which is the next tributary of the Frith of Forth, is the most difficult water from which to take trout that I ever fished in. But the trout are of excellent quality. They seem to be of the same nature as those found in lochs. They do not lie still watching for food, but keep always moving ; so that after taking a fly, you will probably find that the fish has moved some

yards before he takes another. Minnow is a good lure in the Almond. The trout average 4 to the pound; but through the whole river, you may kill them upwards of a pound in weight. Below the new bridge, eight miles from Edinburgh, the trout are heavier than they are higher up. You have the best chance of being successful in a wet day. There are several tributaries of the Almond which contain trout nearly as large as those which are to be found in the main stream; but they are not equal in other respects to those of the Almond. The first is the Gogar. The next is the Broxburn, good in the autumnal months. Then comes the Linnhouse, which joins the Almond about Midcalder. This is the best of the tributaries. About 200 yards higher up, the Harburn joins the Linnhouse. It is also a good stream.

The Avon falls into the Forth above Linlithgow. This was formerly a good trouting stream, but it has been utterly spoilt by chemical works. The Carron is a good stream a few miles from its mouth. Below the village of Denny the trout are scarce, but there are good skellies or chub to be got. A little above Denny there is good trout fishing, but the best of this water is for about a mile and a half both above and below Old Carron Bridge. There is the best water for May fly and creeper that I have had any experience of, and the bait is easily found by the river. There is also good artificial fly-fishing





at the same place ; for though the water is rather rough, there are many pools full of good trout. Higher up, is the Carron Fog. It is much too still for fishing, but further up you will come to a good little stream. In the Bannockburn I have killed good basketsful of trout, but, on the whole, I cannot say much in its praise. We now come to the Devon, running into the Forth on the north side, a little above Alloa. There are few rivers in the south of Scotland which can be compared with the Devon as a trouting stream. The size and quality of the trout are both good. The best are to be found below the village of Tillicoultry ; but at certain seasons they are not easily caught, owing to the stillness of the water. I should say that the best part of the Devon is from Dollar upwards, but a good basketful may be taken between Tillicoultry and Dollar. The average size in the upper water is six to the pound. The Allan, on the same side of the Forth, affords fair fly-fishing from the Bridge of Allan up to Kemback, a distance of six miles. But the river runs roughly, and its bed consists of rocks and large stones, which make fishing in it unpleasant. The Allan has no tributaries worth mentioning, except the Knaik, falling in above Ardoch Bridge. In the Allan and its tributaries the trout vary very much in size. During the summer months, you will find in them both salmon, grilse, and sea trout, and the fishing is open to the public.

The Teith is the next tributary of the Forth. I need say little about it, as it is mostly preserved, and little worth preserving. There are large trout in it, but they are not numerous, and it is difficult to catch them. It is also infested with par. The Keltie runs into the Teith a little below Callander. The two streams are of similar character. Minnow is the best lure, or, if minnows cannot be got, par tail. But par tail I consider at all times an inferior bait to a minnow.

The Forth itself is one of the worst rivers for fishing in that I ever tried. It runs deep and black, and the trout are scarce ; but it abounds in pike. Of the Earn in Perthshire I cannot say much in praise as a stream for common trout, but it is well stocked with perch, and sea trout are numerous. These vary in weight from one pound to two and a half. It is not difficult to take them when the river is a little swelled. The small ordinary trout-flies I have always found better than the larger ones. The sea trout are often to be caught in apparently the most unlikely spots. When the water is heavy, you may kill them with worm.

CLYDE AND THE ENDRICK.

I shall first mention the Endrick, which runs into Loch Lomond. This is a good stream for

angling. It contains excellent trout, many of them exceeding a pound in weight, and their quality is first rate. There are few trout below the falls of Gartness ; but pike are plentiful there, and salmon are to be found at the proper season. The trouting in the upper part of the Endrick is not so good as it ought to be, owing to the reservoirs for the mills often causing large parts of the channel to be left dry ; so that when the mills are not working, you will often have an apparently good stretch of water which does not contain a single trout.

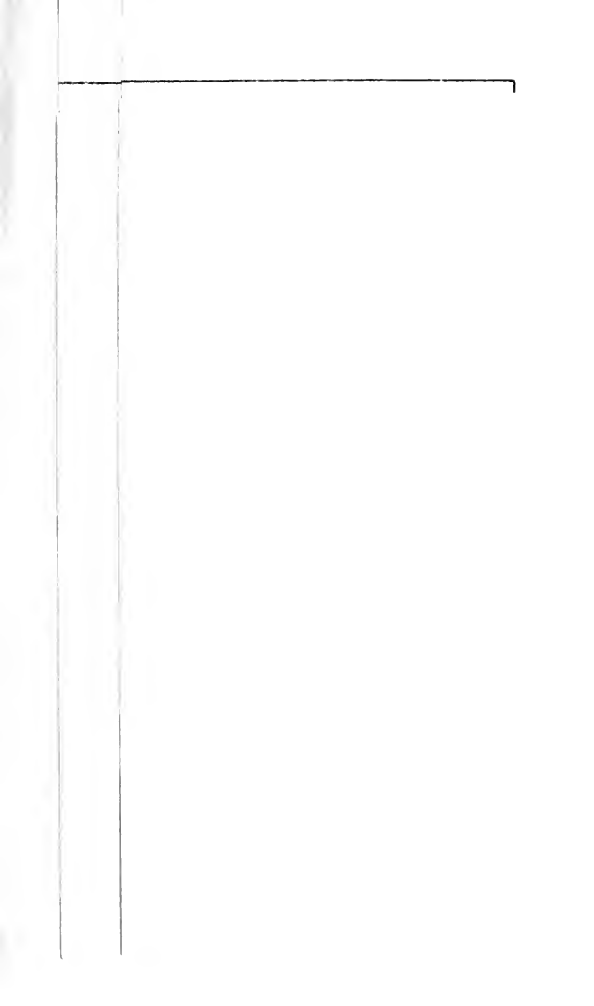
The main stream, above where the burn from the pond joins, affords good fishing for some miles. Then above the falls of Fintry you will find the trout plentiful. But owing to the circumstance which I have mentioned above, I would advise no one to go to the Endrick for a day's fishing without either knowing the water himself, or being in company with some one who does. The lower part of the Clyde is, generally speaking, not good ; though there is some nice looking water from Hamilton up to the falls. The Mouse, which joins the Clyde a little below Lanark, is a deceitful water. A little above Cleghorn station, you will find good streams, and well stocked with trout resembling those of the Clyde ; but, above Cleghorn, there is a stretch of many miles of water so perfectly still that except in a flood or high wind it is impossible to fish in it. Minnow will be found to be the best lure. Owing

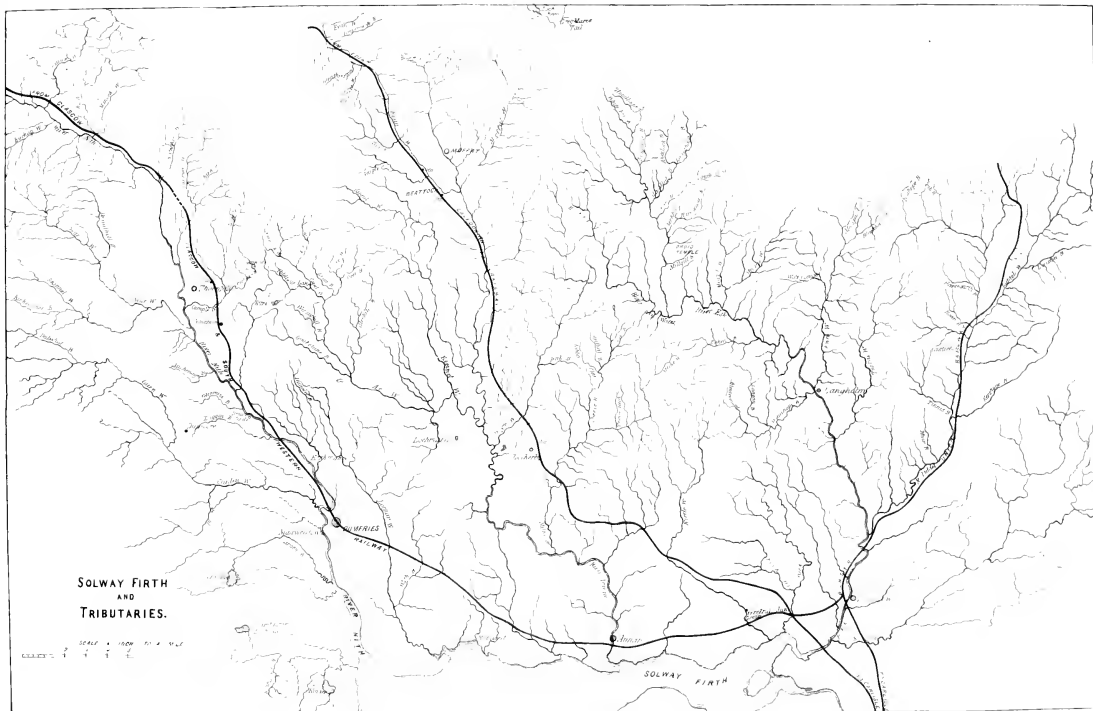
to the height and steepness of the bank, a landing net will be found advantageous. The Clyde itself is very still for some distance above Lanark ; but this part of it contains many large trout, and also a number of pike. Fishing during the night, with a large-sized fly hook, I have found to be the most effectual plan in this part of the Clyde. My favourite parts of this river, are, however, from Symington to Lamington ; from Lamington to Abington ; and from Abington to Elvanfoot. Early in the season, or when the spring is backward, Symington is the best point to start from. Clyde and all its tributaries abound in good trout. It would be difficult to state their average size, but there are few under four ounces ; and as there are no par, whenever you get a nibble you may be sure that it is either a trout or a grayling.

In appearance, the Clyde trout are inferior to those of the Tweed ; but in point of size and quality those of the Tweed are not superior ; for the Clyde trout make up in thickness for their deficiency in breadth.

TRIBUTARIES OF THE SOLWAY.

I will now mention some of the streams that join the Solway Firth on the Scotch side. Of the Nith, I may say that I consider it one of the worst trouting streams in Scotland. So far as the main



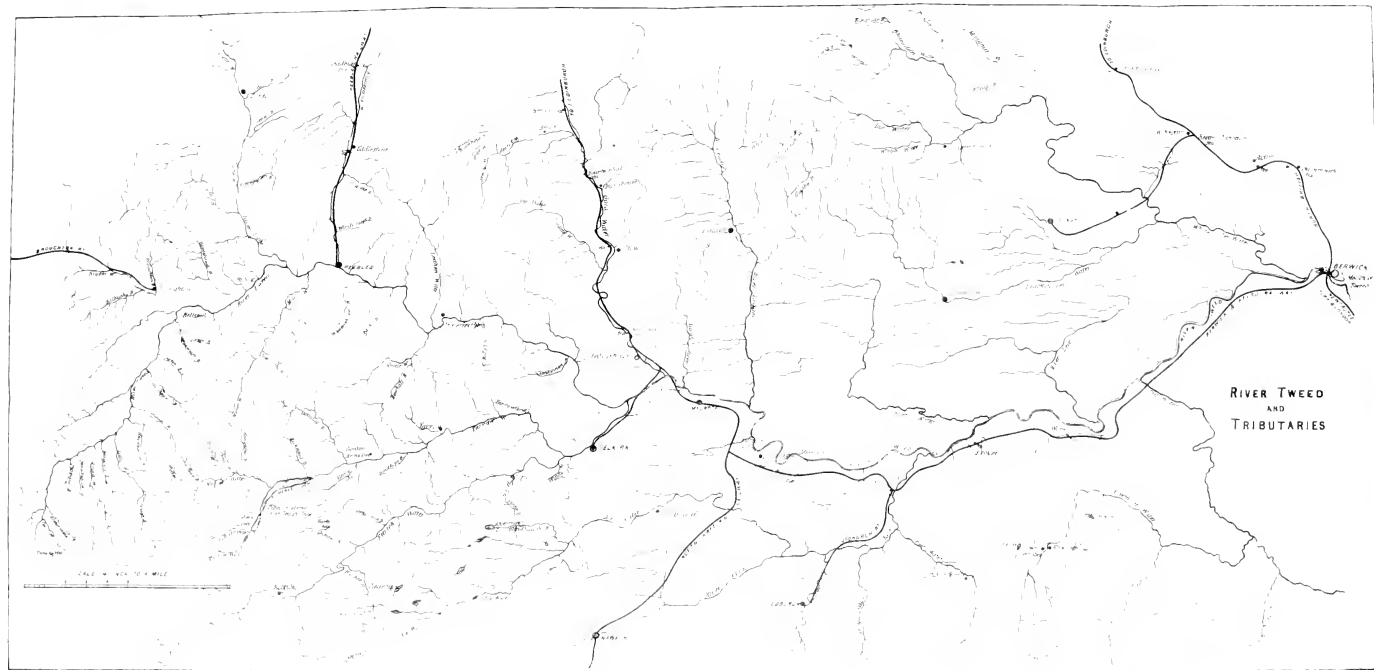


stream goes it is in fact good for nothing ; but some of its tributaries afford fair enough sport. The Cluden is, I think, the best of them. In the proper season, it abounds with a kind of sea-trout called the herling. This is a fish which on an average weighs half a pound. It is easily taken by any of the ordinary lures for trout, and affords good sport. There is a small stream called the Old Water, which joins the Cluden about five miles above the junction with the Nith. This water contains splendid trout ; and any lure which may be seasonable may be used in it to advantage. The Annan abounds in all kinds of migratory fish ; but it is not a good trouting stream. This fact is solely owing to the amazing quantity of par which infest it ; for there are good trout in the Annan, and a great many of them also. The best rivers in this neighbourhood, however, are the water of Milk, flowing between Lockerbie and Ecclefechan, and the Avon, which flows near Beattock. In both of these rivers you will find herling and the ordinary sea-trout. The Milk is the better of the two. The Esk and the Liddle, which are nearly of equal size, unite about two miles above Longtown. The Liddle affords little fishing until you get about three miles above the junction ; it then becomes a fair trouting stream. Above the village of Castle-town it divides into two. The one on the left (going up) is the Hermitage. It is a good trouting stream, but rather rough and stony. The main branch

which still retains the name of the Liddle, is in no respect inferior to the other. The Tarras, which runs into the Esk a little above the foot of the Liddle, is also a good stream for nearly ten miles. The trout, though dull in colour, are rich in flavour. At Langholm, the Esk is joined by the Ewes, a good-sized stream with a clear bottom. The Ewes is admirably suited for May fly and minnow. The former can be got easily at the proper season, but the angler must be provided with minnows from some other source, as he will find none in the Ewes. This river has good tributaries quite up to its source.

The Esk is preserved for three or four miles above Langholm; but higher up there are no restrictions. It rises in a very hilly country, owing to which circumstance, it is often flooded without any rain falling in the lower country through which it runs. Owing to the violence of the current when the river is swelled, the brood of the creeper and May fly is destroyed, at least it is to this cause that I attribute the fact of this insect not being found on the banks of the Esk. Nor are minnows found in it; yet it is the best river for minnow that I ever fished in. It is a fair stream for worm, but not good for fly. The Megget, which joins the Esk about seven miles above Langholm, is not much worth. There are good pools in the White Esk, and from the foot of it to the top of the main stream, there is good fishing, with many good tributaries.





RIVER TWEED
AND
TRIBUTARIES

TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES.

Tweed may fairly be characterised as a good trouting river. Many of its upper tributaries are excellent. I will spend no time in treating of those places which are preserved. The best day's sport that I ever had in the lower part of the Tweed was near the village of Lessudden, at Merton Bridge. It was on a beautiful day in the end of May 1856, fishing with fly, I killed forty trouts weighing twenty-one pounds. The six largest weighed six pounds, and the next six weighed four pounds. There is a good spot below where the Dryburgh ferry-boat crosses the Tweed. The river there divides into two branches. They are both good; but I prefer the one on the Dryburgh side. If you fish first down the one and then up the other, you will find this a good day's angling. You must use fine tackle; and if you are fishing with artificial flies, they should be of a drab colour, or light grey. The trout are larger here than they are further up, and if the angler should happen to hook two at once, the chances are that they will break his line.

From Dryburgh to Leader foot there is very little water open to the public. But above this, and up to the source of the Tweed, there is only one piece of water preserved—that is Lord Somerville's.

Immediately above Melrose, Tweed is not good for creeper or May fly, though a few trout may be taken with these lures early in the morning. From the junction of the Ettrick upwards, they may be used with advantage. Probably the best part of the Tweed for every kind of trout fishing is about Stobo, which is seven miles above Peebles. Here there are also numerous burns, in which large trout are abundant. The Whiteadder enters the Tweed about three miles above Berwick, on the left hand. It is a capital trouting stream ; which is owing, I believe, in a good measure to their being no large town on its banks.

The Blackadder is much inferior to the Whiteadder in point of the quantity of trout which it contains. There are, however, many in it of splendid quality and size, but they are wary and difficult to be taken. The bottom of the river, unlike that of the Whiteadder, is foul, which is very troublesome to anglers.

The Dye joins the Whiteadder below Longformacus. It is a capital stream when a little swollen, and towards the end of the year.

The Till may be called an English river. It enters the Tweed a mile or two below Coldstream. It is well adapted for trout fishing, though it is rather rapid for a mile or two above the mouth. At Milfield plain, you might suppose it to be a canal from its appearance. It has several good

tributaries. The Glen is its main feeder. It is too still for good fishing, and is much infested with pike ; but where the Coldstream and Wooler road crosses it, at a place called Copland, you will get some good fishing. A few miles up, two streams unite to form the Glen. The one on the left, going up, is called the College, the other the Bowmont. They have both their source in the Cheviot hills. The College is, generally speaking, too rapid for good fishing ; but there are swarms of small trout in it. The most unskilful angler may capture these with the artificial fly in almost any number. But it also abounds with very large trout, which are not so easily caught. You will scarcely kill them except when the water is muddy. On such occasions you will find minnow a successful lure.

The Bowmont is larger than the College. For some miles above the junction it runs very still, with a muddy bottom. There are large trout in this still water, but it is difficult to catch them. When you have passed the still water, however, you come to beautiful trouting streams. They afford good sport for any method of angling. You will find minnow an excellent lure in the Bowmont. Above the village of Yetholm, the trout fall off in size, but increase very much in quantity. In the spring months, with fly, you may kill twelve to twenty dozen, if so disposed, almost any day. In summer, here as elsewhere, they grow more wary. I would

not advise beginners to fish much among those mountain streams. The facility with which the small trout are caught induces a careless and unscientific method of angling. More skill is required to kill six trouts in a clear much-fished water in the month of July than to kill a gross among the Cheviot burns in the spring or autumnal months. There is generally a good supply of sea-trouts in the Bowmont from the beginning of August to the end of the season. If you begin your day's angling a mile below Yetholm, being favoured with a dark coloured water, you ought to kill one or two at the season I have mentioned. Either worm or minnow is a good lure.

The Eden falls into the Tweed three miles below Kelso. It contains trout of splendid size and quality, but it is nearly all preserved. The artificial fly in spring, and worm during the season, are the most successful lures in the Eden.

Teviot joins the Tweed at Kelso. It is an excellent trouting river, and has many good tributaries. It is almost impossible to go wrong in the Teviot. Towards the mouth, you will find splendid streams for worm fishing. All the way up, till you get to about two miles above the village of Roxburgh, you will find excellent water for all kinds of angling. A good deal of the Teviot, however, is preserved. Kale joins the Teviot about five miles above Kelso. The trout in this stream are numerous ;

but, generally speaking, not large. Much the best part of it lies above the village of Morebattle. The Oxnam runs in on the same side as the Kale, and is the next tributary. I consider it a bad trouting stream. We then come to the Jed, a little river which affords excellent sport to the angler. Worm is the most successful lure in the Jed. The trout are large and of good quality. Below Jedburgh, the fishing is not good. The Ale runs in from the opposite side. An immense number of lochs empty themselves into this stream. Many of these lochs contain excellent trout, and others pike and perch. In the Ale, the best place for fishing is, I think, about the village of Lilliesleaf. The trout vary greatly in size. In the course of a day, you may kill them from two ounces up to two pounds. The large ones are no doubt bred in the lochs. There are also pike in the Ale, but they do not annoy the trout angler. Rule is a good stream, but much annoyance will be felt from woods which overhang the banks. The Slitterick joins the Teviot at Hawick. There were good trout in it at one time, but it has been spoilt by drainage. The Borthwick joins two miles above Hawick, and the best fishing is about seven miles from Hawick, and is best after a flood. The Allan joins the Teviot four and a half miles above Hawick. It is the last tributary worth mentioning. I now return to the tributaries of the Tweed. It is joined by the Leader about

two miles below Melrose. The lower part of the stream is preserved ; but from a mile above Earls-ton it is open to the public. The Leader affords excellent fishing. I used to consider the Gala a better stream ; but, since communication to the latter river has been opened up by railway, I should say that the Leader has become decidedly superior. The most central place for fishing operations is the village of Lauder. For four miles below Lauder, and for three miles and a half above it, the water is excellent ; and, still higher up, there are several burns abounding in trout of good size and rare quality. The Ellwand is the next tributary. It used to be a good stream, but it has been so spoilt by drainage and other causes that all I need say about is that the angler should avoid it. Gala joins the Tweed a mile below the little manufacturing town of Galashiels. You must go a mile above Galashiels before you begin to fish. Between this distance from the town and the Bowland station, the largest trout in the Gala are to be found ; but it requires fine tackle and a practised hand to kill them here, except with the creeper and Mayfly during the season, when they may be caught without difficulty. These insects appear very early on the Gala. In the locality to which I am referring, the trout are clear and yellow, and not unfrequently a pound in weight. They do not decrease much in size until you come to Stow, where the

Lugate joins the Gala. I have always been successful with fly in the Lugate from its mouth up to Nethershiels ; in it the worm is a successful lure. Most of the trout, however, are small, and when this is the case I prefer fly. Gala, above Stow up to Fountainhall, is an excellent water, abounding in trout ; but they are inferior both in point of size and quality to those below Stow. They are, however, more easily taken. They average six to the pound. May is the best month of the year for the Gala. From Fountainhall up to the first bridge across the Heriot, the trout are still smaller, and still more easily taken. My favourite fishing ground, on the upper part of this water, is from about a mile above Fountainhall, where the Armit joins the Gala, upwards.

Armit is a good stream, and will afford good practice to a beginner with the worm. The Little Gala contains good trout, but it often becomes so small as to render fishing in it impossible. Heriot I need scarcely mention ; as, for a long way up, the water has been spoilt, and it is not worth while to go above the spoilt water. There are small burns, no doubt, running in higher up, which contain trout ; but in these you may kill the trout with a worm, a hook, and a piece of twine. No skill is required to take them, and consequently there is no sport. The Ettrick joins the Tweed between Selkirk and Gala-shiels. A mile from the foot, the trout are large,

and there is good fly-fishing ; but the good water is of small extent, and when once you are past it the fishing both upwards and down to the foot of the Yarrow is bad. Nor can I say much in favour of the Yarrow. It is overrun with par, and except in a few pools fishing is needless. The Megget, running into St. Mary's Loch, is a good stream ; but I like it better in the autumnal months than during spring or summer.

In both Ettrick and Yarrow you will find minnow a good lure ; but you will require to get your bait elsewhere, as minnows are not to be found in these streams. I must, however, mention that there is good sport to be got from Ettrick Kirk to Bodsbeck Law. Here the angler will find splendid water, and he will also find himself within one and a half hour's walk of Moffat or of the Grey Mare's Tail. The little water Tim, which joins the Ettrick at the Kirk, and the Rankle burn, further down on the same side, afford no good fishing. Returning to the Tweed, the next tributary is the Caddon, running in two miles above the Ettrick. The trout in this stream are generally small, but they vary greatly in size. I once caught twenty dozen in it, weighing twenty-three pounds ; but there were eight pounds of good trout among the number. There is a road to Stow, or if the angler takes the burn on the left, he will come upon the Leithen, about four miles above the village of Innerleithen.

The Leithen is a good stream, very much resembling the Gala in the number and quality of the trout which it contains. Three miles above Innerleithen, it divides into two branches. The smallest branch I consider the best. The Quair joins the Tweed on the opposite side from the Leithen. The trout are very abundant, but so small that they are not worth catching. The largest I hooked in the course of a day's fishing might be about a quarter of a pound. He is in the Quair still, for anything that I know to the contrary. The Eddleston falls in just at Peebles. It is not generally held in repute among anglers ; but I have taken good basketfuls of trout out of it ; but they are small. It is, however, quite free from par, which is a recommendation. The Manor runs in on the opposite side, about two miles above Peebles. It is rather a larger stream than the Eddleston. It is a very superior one, so far as the angler is concerned. The lower part of it is much infested with par, but you should begin about three miles from the mouth. You will then have nearly three miles further of good fishing. Creeper, May fly, and worm are all successful lures in the Manor, during their proper season. Generally, the trout are not large ; but you will get a few of good size among the small ones. The Lyne joins the Tweed about three miles above Peebles. The lower part of this stream is little worth, the trout being for the most part poor and small ; a few good ones may,

however, be taken with the minnow. As the angler goes up, he will find the fish improve in size and quality. Some fair sport may be had in the Tarth, a small tributary of the Lyne.

Biggar water enters the Tweed nine miles above Peebles, and about two miles above Stobo. At the foot of Biggar, there are several good pools and streams; but they are much infested with par. May fly should not be used here, but the minnow may be applied in a flooded water. The Holmes joins the Biggar near its foot. It affords good fishing from its mouth almost to the very source. Par do not frequent it; and the trout are easily taken. Worm is a good lure. Though the banks of the stream are wooded, the trees will not be found troublesome.

I will now give from my diary an account of part of a season's fishing; beginning on the 8th February 1858. The weather, at this season, is not generally good for fishing; and it will be noticed that as the season advances, the "takes" increase in weight. Up to the middle of April, it will be understood that I always fish down the stream, whether with bait or artificial fly:—

1858,			Number.	Weight.
Feb. 8.	Gala, down from Lugate foot—fly	.	4 doz.	5 lbs.
„ 11.	Do., below Stow, do.	.	3½ „	5 „
„ 12.	Do., do., do.	.	4 „	7 „
„ 13.	Do., do., do.	.	5½ „	7½ „
„ 15.	Do., above do., do.	.	4 „	5½ „
„ 16.	Do., near Galashiels, do.	.	1½ „	3 „

1856,		Number.	Weight.
Feb. 17.	Ettrick, with worm and sinker . . .	2 doz.	7 lbs.
„ 24.	Gala, below Stow, fly and worm, with sinkers on the worm tackle . . .	2 „	7 „
„ 27.	Do., with do. and do.	3 $\frac{1}{4}$ „	7 „
„ 28.	Do., below Stow, with do. and do. . .	3 „	6 „
		<hr/> 32 $\frac{3}{4}$ doz.	<hr/> 60 lbs.

Note.—When the day was fine I killed most with the small black spider; but when the day was dull with a blue wing and black hackle. If there is much sun during this month, you must use the worm tackle without a sinker. On some of the days mentioned above, I found ice on the Gala, until the afternoon. I have often killed trout with fly, with the ice floating down the stream.

The first part of March this year was so stormy that I could not fish. I have no entry, therefore, in my diary until

1858,		Number.	Weight.
Mar. 16.	Gala, below Stow, fly . . .	7 doz.	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.
„ 17.	Do., do., do.	6 „	8 „
„ 18.	Do., below Bowland, do.	3 „	5 „
„ 19.	Do., above Stow, do.	3 „	5 „
„ 20.	Do., below do., worm	2 „	4 „
„ 22.	Leader, below Lauder, fly	6 „	9 „
„ 23.	Ettrick, near the foot, worm	4 „	6 „
„ 24.	Leader, below Lauder, fly	6 „	9 „
„ 25.	Gala, near Galashiels,	1 „	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
„ 26.	Leader, below Lauder, fly	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	9 „
„ 27.	Gala, above Stow, do.	4 „	5 „
„ 29.	Do., below do., do.	4 „	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
„ 30.	Tweed, at Melrose, do.	$\frac{1}{2}$ „	$\frac{1}{2}$ „

Note.—This is too early in the season for Tweed.

31.	Leader, below Lauder, fly . . .	4 „	8 „
		<hr/> 55 doz.	<hr/> 85 lbs.

Note.—On many of the days on which I fished in this month the weather was frosty, and sometimes snow was falling. Most good anglers would have said it was impossible to fish with success under such circumstances; and I thought so myself until I tried.

1858,			Number.	Weight.
April	2. Leader, below Lauder,	fly	8½ doz.	16 lbs.
„	5. Gala, below Stow	do.	5 „	9 „
„	6. Do., do.,	do.	7½ „	12 „
„	7. Do., near Galashiels	do.	1½ „	3 „
„	9. Do., below Stow	do.	7½ „	12½ „
„	10. Do., do.,	do.	6 „	9 „
„	12. Do., do.,	do.	3 „	6 „
„	16. Do., do.,	do.	8½ „	12 „
„	17. Do., above do.,	do.	11 „	14 „
„	19. Do., do.,	do.	7½ „	10 „
„	20. Leader,	do.	11 „	19 „
„	21. Tweed, at Dryburgh,	do.	1 „	4 „
„	22. Leader, below Lauder,	do.	4½ „	11 „
„	23. Tweed, at Dryburgh,	do.	2 „	9 „
„	24. Do., do.,	do.	2 „	9 „
„	26. Do., do.,	do.	3½ „	20 „
„	27. Foot of Gala to foot of Ettrick, do.	do.	2½ „	9½ „
One of the trout weighed 2½ lbs.				
„	28. Tweed, at Melrose, creeper . . .	1 „	6 „	
„	29. Do., above Cadden foot, fly and creeper	3½ „	12 „	
„	30. Gala, to the foot of Ettrick, fly and creeper	2½ „	10 „	
Giving a total, for April, of in 20 days,			99½ doz.	213 lbs.

1858,			Number.	Weight.
May	1. Gala, below Stow, fly . . .	3 doz.	9 lbs.	
„	3. Leader, do.	17 „	32 „	

It snowed nearly all day; but a num-

ber of brown flies came on the water notwithstanding. I had on a light wing on the two lowest hooks, and

1858,	a spider on the top hook.	Number.	Weight.
May 4.	Ettrick, fly . . .	2½ doz.	7 lbs.
„ 5.	Leader, below Lauder, do. . .	11½ „	20 „
„ 6.	Gala, below Stow, creeper and fly .	12 „	18 „
„ 7.	Leader, do. . .	8 „	25 „
„ 8.	Gala, do. . .	3½ „	12 „
„ 10.	Leader, creeper . . .	8 „	25 „

Generally I went 3½ miles below Lauder, and fished up to it.

„ 11.	Gala, below Stow, creeper and fly .	3½ „	13 „
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If the day is clear and hot, creeper is the best lure; if dull, the artificial fly is preferable. In the afternoon, minnow is often successful.

„ 12.	Tweed, foot of Gala, creeper, fly .	2 „	10 „
„ 13.	Do., foot of Ettrick, fly .	2½ „	7 „

Day very unfavourable.

„ 14.	Tweed, near Dryburgh, do. .	2 „	11 „
„ 15.	Do., foot of Ettrick, do. .	2½ „	7½ „
„ 17.	Do., Melrose, do. .	4 „	8 „
„ 18.	Tweed, foot of Ettrick, do. .	1½ „	4 „
„ 20.	Gala, above Fountainhall, do. .	13 „	20 „
„ 22.	Do., with worm .	2 „	4 „
„ 23.	Do., fly .	13½ „	24 „
„ 24.	Tweed, do. .	2½ „	7 „
„ 25.	Do., do. .	3 „	9 „
„ 26.	Lugate, do. .	19 „	28 „
„ 28.	Cadon, do. .	20 „	24 „

Total for the month, in 22 days, 156½ doz. 324½ lbs.

1858,		Number.	Weight.
June 1.	Gala, above Stow, May fly	10½ doz.	26 lbs.

1858,			Number.	Weight.
June 2.	Gala, below Stow,	May-fly .	5 doz.	16 lbs.
,, 3.	Do., from below Stow to above Fountainhall,	} do. .	12½	,, 36 ,,
,, 5.	Do., do. to do.	do. .	9	,, 24 ,,
,, 6.	Do., below Bowland,	do. .	4½	,, 11 ,,
,, 8.	Almond, 8 miles from Edinb.,	do. .	2½	,, 8 ,,
,, 21.	Gala,	worm .	7	,, 20 ,,
,, 22.	Do.,	do. .	4½	,, 11 ,,
,, 25.	Leader,	do. .	11½	,, 25 ,,

This is the greatest number and weight
that I ever killed with worm, con-
sidering the time I fished.

Total for nine days, 67 doz. 177 lbs.

The largest capture of trout I believe which I ever made was in the Leader in the spring of 1843, with fly. I did not note either the number or weight, but I filled three large baskets. They took the fly readily, even when the dressing was nearly all worn off it. In the Gala, in the month of June, I once killed 51 lb. weight; a statement which I can prove by the testimony of credible witnesses.

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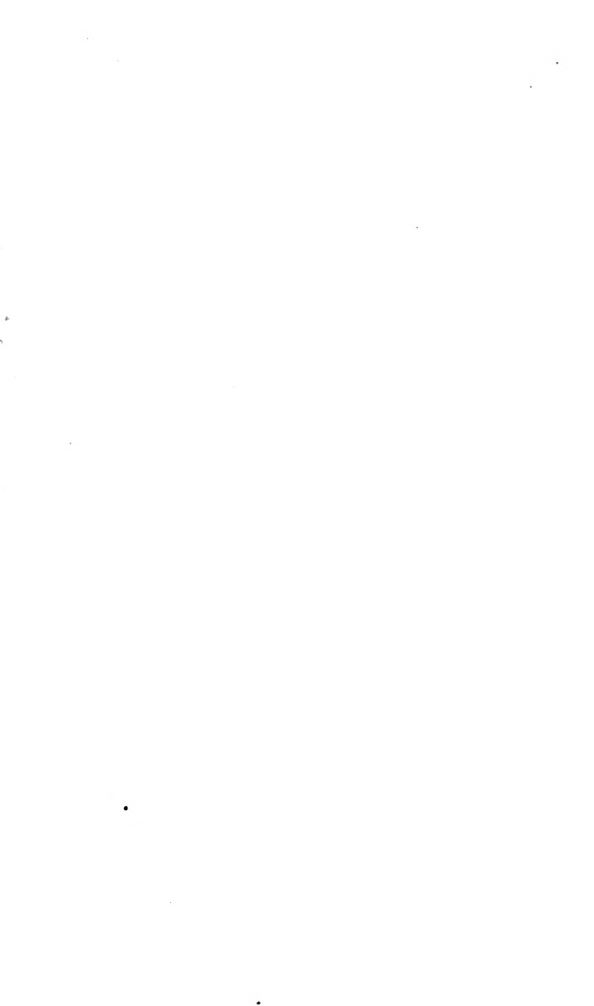
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